

SUBC1
B2

29. (Once Amended) An aqueous suspension according to Claim 22, [comprising] obtained by crumbling a filter cake originating from a reaction of precipitation of silica [and crumbled].

SUB E1
B3

31. (Once Amended) A method for the preparation of an aqueous suspension of precipitated silica, [which] having a solids content [is] between 10 and 40% by weight, [which] a viscosity [is] lower than 4×10^{-2} Pa.s at a shear rate of 50 s^{-1} and wherein the amount of silica present in the supernatant obtained after centrifuging said suspension at 7500 revolutions per minute for 30 minutes represents more than 50% of the weight of the silica present in the suspension, comprising the steps of:

(A) precipitating silica by reacting an acidifying agent with an alkali metal (M) silicate, [whereby] by:

(i) providing an initial base stock [is formed], comprising a proportion of the total amount of the alkali metal silicate introduced into the reaction, the silicate concentration expressed as SiO_2 in [the] said base stock being lower than 20 g/l,

(ii) adding said [the] acidifying agent [is added] to [the] said initial base stock until at least 5 % of the amount of M_2O present in [the] said initial base stock is neutralized,

(iii) adding said [the] acidifying agent [is added] to the reaction mixture simultaneously with the remaining amount of alkali metal silicate such that the ratio (amount of silica added)/(amount of silica present in the initial base stock) is between 10 and 100;

- ~~SUB E~~
B3
cont
- (B) separating from the reaction mixture a precipitation cake which has a solids content of between 10 and 40%; and
- (C) deagglomerating the said cake to obtain a suspension of low viscosity.
-

- B4
38. (Once Amended) A method according to Claim 31, wherein, in step (C),
- (i) said precipitation cake is washed with one or more organic solvents and the cake thus washed is dried to obtain a silica powder, and
- (ii) an amount of the said silica powder is suspended in water, such that the [solids] silica content of the final suspension is between 10 and 40%.

~~SUB C2~~

39. (Once Amended) A method for the preparation of an aqueous suspension of precipitated silica, which solids content is between 10 and 40% by weight, which viscosity is lower than 4×10^{-2} Pa.s at a shear rate of 50 s^{-1} and wherein the amount of silica present in the supernatant obtained after centrifuging the said suspension at 7500 revolutions per minute for 30 minutes represents more than 50 % of the weight of the silica present in the suspension, comprising the steps of :

(A) precipitating silica by reacting an acidifying agent with an alkali metal (M) silicate, [whereby] by:

- (i) providing an initial base stock [is formed], comprising at least a proportion of the total amount of the alkali metal silicate introduced into the reaction, and an electrolyte,